



MAGYAR TUDOMÁNYOS AKADEMIA

CELEBRATING 200 YEARS OF THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

A CHAMBER EXHIBITION AT
UNESCO HEADQUARTERS
PARIS, 11 DECEMBER 2025

VÁRÁSHATALOM

HALLTAS
A MAGYAR
TUDOMÁNYOS
AKADÉMIA

2025

Unnepejünk
együtt!
2025
MTA



PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

It is an absolute honour for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and its Library to celebrate its 200th anniversary together with UNESCO. The foundation of a Hungarian learned society, and a year later the establishment of its Library, is considered by historians as a symbol of the birth of the modern Hungarian nation – a nation that is proud of its origins, its language and culture, while being eager to connect with and learn about the rest of the world. Its mission is no different today: to advance universal science and to serve the Hungarian nation by promoting scientific research and culture in Hungary.

We are truly privileged to showcase some of the items from our rich collections at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris as a testament to 200 years of commitment to serving this dual purpose. The fact that five of the seven items on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in Hungary are wholly or partly owned by our Academy is a clear indication of our long-term engagement, further emphasized by the way in which our collections have been shaped and enriched since 1825.

The Hungarian Academy of Sciences was not founded by a monarch or a government, but was initiated from private donations, in the same way its marvellous palace would be built later on in 1865, widening the alliance behind the original intention. The items in the Library and Art Collection were assembled by people who supported scientific work, and by scientists themselves as a memorial to their own work. The collections therefore also chronicle our history: they show how Hungarian scientific life was first linked primarily to European workshops and then, from the 19th century onwards, increasingly to Asian, African, and American communities.

It was a Hungarian scholar, Károly Reviczky who first translated the classics of Persian literature into Latin, thus making them part of European knowledge. Among our many pioneering minds, we must highlight Ferenc Dombay who wrote the first Moorish Arabic grammar (1800), and Sándor Kőrösi Csoma, the first European Tibetologist.

Equally important work was carried out by Turkologist Ármin Vámbéry and Semitic philologist Ignác Goldziher, while Aurél Stein was a world-class scholar of Inner Asian studies – to mention just a few outstanding personalities whose documents and photographs are in the Academy's ownership today.

In the field of natural and life sciences, Hungarian scientists in the past were just as well-connected and recognized on the international level as they are today. Their work can only be appreciated for its real worth as part of the history of science as a universal human enterprise and not in the isolation of our own traditions.

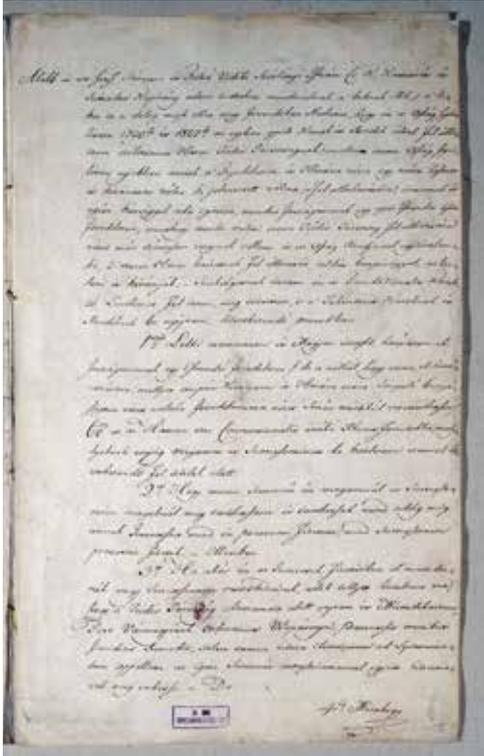
As a nod to the distinguished premises kindly hosting our exhibition in Paris, we also wanted to show you some of the many ties that have bonded us with French culture and science over the centuries. Although Hungarian language and heritage may sometimes seem an exotic addition to European diversity, the history of Hungarian–French relations clearly demonstrates our common foundations in both science and literature. The theatre play “The Tragedy of Man” (1862) by Imre Madách, a giant of 19th-century Hungarian literature, has been translated into 48 languages, including French, and it has earned the right to be listed among the most influential works of world literature on the fundamental questions of human existence alongside Goethe's *Faust*. That is why the first French translation of this poetic drama is featured in our selection.

I sincerely hope that this modest exhibition, which endeavours to offer but a glimpse of the richness of our collections, will inspire some of you to visit the re-opened exhibition halls of the Palace of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest, and immerse yourselves in the amazing display of the most cherished items of our collections shown for the first time to the general public in such abundance.

*Tamás Freund, President
Hungarian Academy of Sciences*



FOUNDATION CHARTER DETAILING THE DONATIONS OF ISTVÁN SZÉCHENYI, ÁBRAHÁM VAY, GYÖRGY ANDRÁSSY, AND GYÖRGY KÁROLYI, 1826



The founding of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences is traditionally dated to the district session of the Hungarian Diet held on 3 November 1825, when **Count István Széchenyi** made his now-famous declaration, known to virtually every Hungarian: *“I have no voice here, I am not one of the Greats of the Nation, but I am a landowner, and if an institution is established that promotes the Hungarian language, that aids in educating our compatriots to become Hungarians, I will sacrifice one year’s income from my estates.”* (A *Magyar Tudós Társaság Évkönyvei/Annals of the Hungarian Learned Society*, 1831–1832, Vol. I, Trattner- Károlyi Printing House, Pest, 1833.) Széchenyi’s donation – worth 60,000 forints – was of immense significance in contemporary Hungary and inspired similar, though smaller, contributions from other aristocrats: **György Károlyi**, **György Andrassy**, and **Ábrahám Vay**. These four became the founding patrons, each playing an important role in the Academy’s early years.

In 1826, the founders formalised their donations in writing, arranging it so that only the annual interest on the pledged amounts had to be paid to the institution, while the principal remained in the custody of the donors’ families. Széchenyi, always thorough, included a clause outlining what should happen if the institution ceased to exist:

“As the transience of human affairs and institutions makes it imperative, I must make provisions for the eventual demise of this now happily born national institution – may Divine Providence, in its wisdom, delay that moment as long as it sees fit to preserve my dear Hungarian nation among the nations.” (Hungarian National Archives, OL Archivum Regni N. 36. Lad. A. NB. Academia. No. 2.) In such a case, the funds would revert to the family, but only to be used for another worthy national purpose.

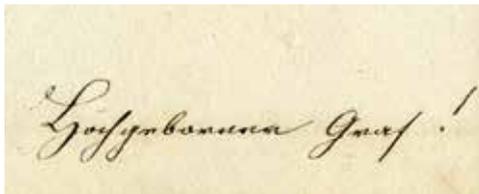


LETTER FROM TERÉZ BRUNSZVIK TO ISTVÁN SZÉCHENYI, IN WHICH THE COUNTESS REQUESTS HIS SUPPORT FOR THE CAUSE OF KINDERGARTENS, 12 JUNE 1829

Countess **Teréz Brunszvik** (1775–1861) was one of the most influential figures in early nineteenth-century Hungarian education reform. A pioneer of preschool education, she founded the first *kisded-óvó* (kindergarten) in Hungary and became a key advocate for women’s and children’s instruction.

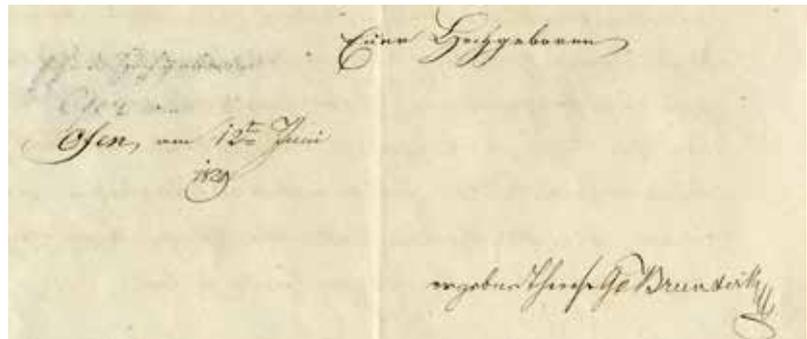
Inspired by the pedagogical ideas of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, whom she visited in Switzerland, Brunszvik opened the *Angyalkert* (“Angel Garden”) in Buda in 1828. Conceived as a place for the moral, emotional, and intellectual development of young children, it marked the beginning of organised early childhood education in Hungary. She later promoted teacher training and the establishment of similar institutions throughout the country – by the 1830s, several kindergartens operated under her guidance, and by her death in 1861, their number exceeded eighty.

Although herself a member of the aristocracy, Brunszvik’s initiatives were initially viewed with reserve by many among the nobility, who regarded early education and social welfare as matters beneath their concern. Undeterred, she financed her first institution largely from her own means and gradually won broader support. By the mid-1830s, prominent reform-minded nobles, including Miklós Wesselényi and Pál Eszterházy, joined the Association for the Promotion of Nursery School Institutes, signaling a shift in elite attitudes toward social reform.



Brunszvik’s intellectual and moral outlook placed her within the same reformist milieu as István Széchenyi. The two corresponded with mutual respect; Széchenyi addressed her as “most gracious Countess” and acknowledged her efforts in na-

tional improvement through education. Like Széchenyi’s economic and infrastructural projects, Brunszvik’s educational work reflected a shared conviction that Hungary’s progress depended on enlightened, gradual reform rooted in civic virtue and moral renewal.





JÁNOS BOLYAI, *APPENDIX, SCIENTIAM SPATII ABSOLUTE VERAM EXHIBENS: A VERITATE AUT FALSITATE AXIOMATIS XI. EUCLIDEI (A PRIORI HAUD UNQUAM DECIDENDA) INDEPENDENTEM; ADJECTA AD CASUM FALSITATIS, QUADRATURA CIRCULI GEOMETRICA. AUCTORE JOHANNE BOLYAI DE EADEM, GEOMETRARUM IN EXERCITU CAESAREO REGIO AUSTRIACO CASTRENSIUM CAPITANEO. COLL. REF., MAROS-VÁSÁRHELY, 1832*

Appendix. Presenting the absolutely true science of space, independent of the truth or falsity of Euclid's Axiom XI (which can never be decided a priori); with the addition, in the case of its falsity, of a geometric quadrature of the circle. By János Bolyai, son of the same [Farkas Bolyai], Captain of Military Engineers in the Imperial and Royal Austrian Army.

„I created a whole new world out of nothing.”

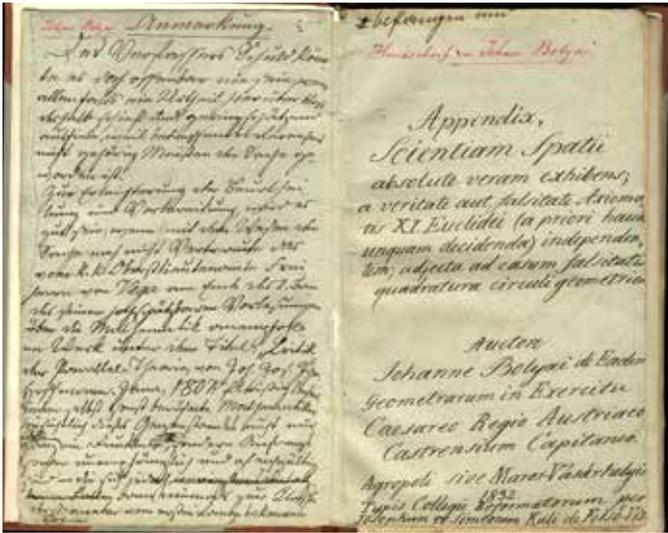
– Letter of Bolyai to his father –

Farkas Bolyai (1775–1856), a polymath and professor at the Reformed College of Marosvásárhely, was an exceptional mathematician. In 1832–1833 he published the two-volume *Tentamen* (“Experiment, Attempt”), presenting in Latin both his and contemporary mathematical results. At the end of the first volume, he included his son János Bolyai’s *Scientiam Spatii...* (“The Science of Space”), later world-famous as the *Appendix*.

In this work, **János Bolyai** (1802–1860) logically developed non-Euclidean geometry, showing that a consistent geometric system could exist without Euclid’s parallel postulate. Denying the postulate entirely led to what he called absolute – or hyperbolic – geometry.

In 1831, the *Appendix* also appeared as a separate offprint, a unique copy of which is preserved in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Although lacking its printed title page, it contains handwritten versions by both Farkas and János Bolyai. This was János’s own working copy, marked by his notes, corrections, and geometric sketches.

Red-ink annotations were added by Ferenc Schmidt, an architect from Temesvár, who recognised the importance of the *Appendix* and collected Bolyai-related materials. In 1907, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences acquired this unique volume from him, preserving traces of both father and son.

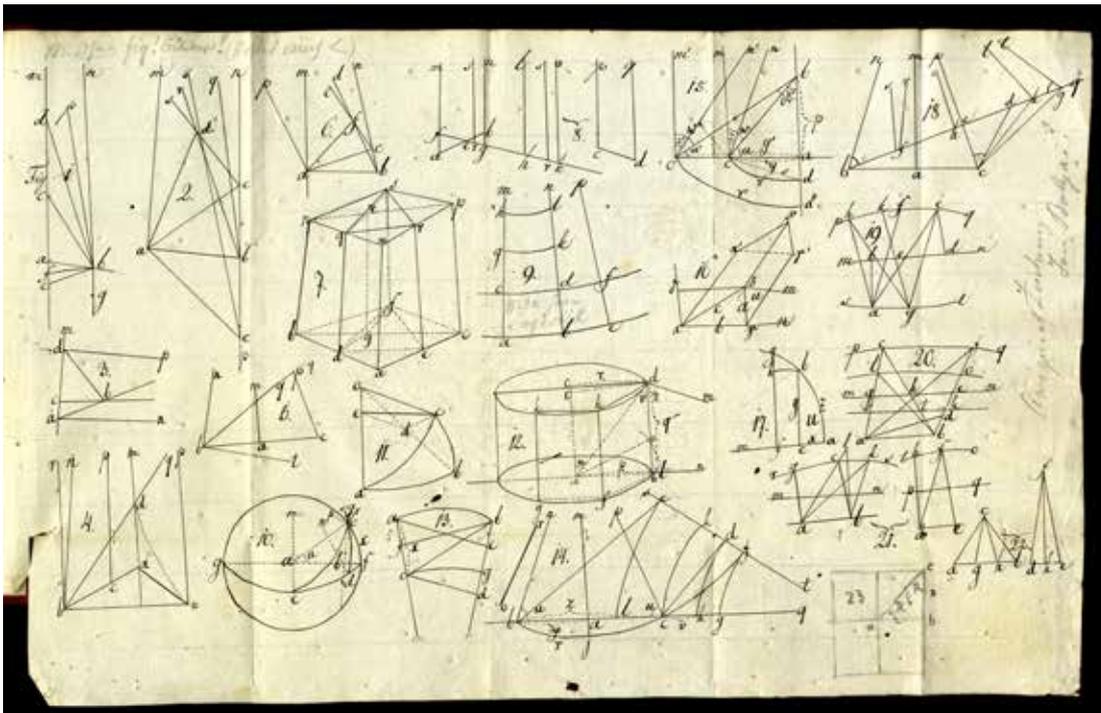


An intriguing feature: several back pages were pierced with a fine needle. These were not compass marks but traces of a disinfection method used during the 1831 cholera epidemic, allowing smoke to pass through the pages.

Although the Appendix revolutionised geometry, for years the discovery of non-Euclidean geometry was credited to Nikolai Lobachevsky of Kazan University. Modern research proved that Bolyai's work preceded his. Lobachevsky published similar but less precise results in 1829–1830, calling them

“imaginary geometry.” By then, János Bolyai had already written to his father from Temesvár (3 November 1823): “I created a whole new world out of nothing.”

In 2009, this remarkable volume was inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.



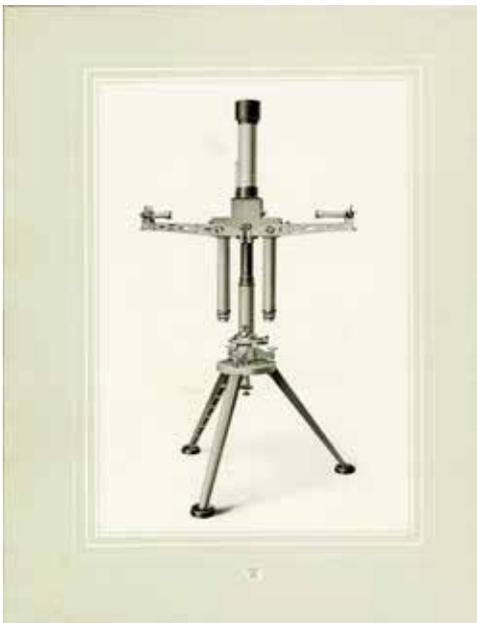


COMMERCIAL BROCHURE, PRINTED IN HUNGARY IN 1928, BEARING THE FOLLOWING TEXT ON THE COVER: “*THE SMALL ORIGINAL EÖTVÖS TORSION BALANCE – FERDINAND SÜSS PRECISION MECHANICAL AND OPTICAL WORKS LIMITED, BUDAPEST I. (HUNGARY)*”.

The booklet comprises 12 numbered pages, dimensions 22.5 x 30 cm.
Identity: Ms 5890/67, Owner and custodian: Archives of the Academy,
Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Baron **Loránd Eötvös** (1848–1919) was a Hungarian physicist renowned for his pioneering research on gravitation, surface tension, and for inventing the torsion balance. Though he initially studied law, he soon turned to physics, continuing his studies in Heidelberg and Königsberg. After earning his doctorate, he became a professor in Budapest and played a central role in Hungarian science for nearly fifty years. His innovative studies on capillarity and later his precise experimental methods and gravity field research brought him international fame.

Torsion balance



Eötvös's torsion balance, a refinement of earlier instruments, became one of the most sensitive tools for measuring variations in Earth's gravity. The so-called Eötvös pendulum could detect not only the direction but also minute horizontal changes in gravitational force, revealing the distribution of mass in the Earth's crust. It proved vital in geodesy, geophysics, and mineral exploration, helping locate deposits of oil, coal, and ore.

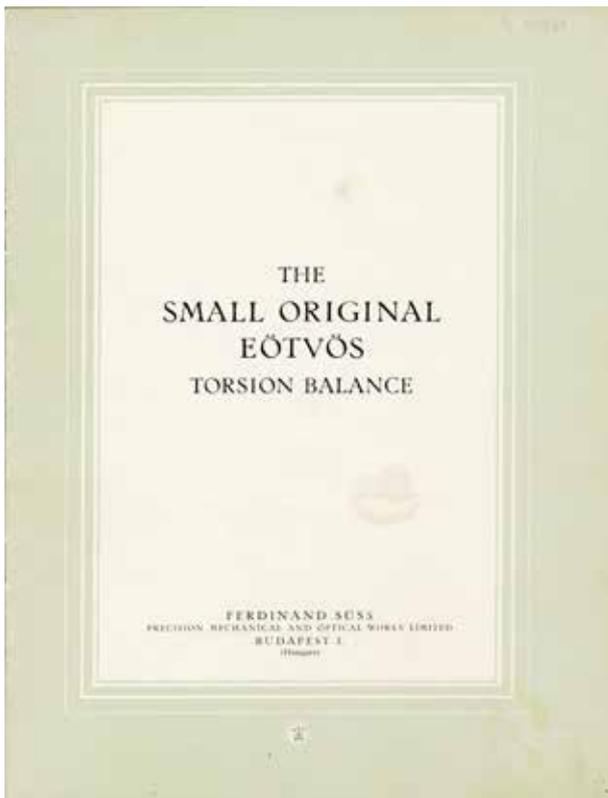
Though Eötvös never patented the device, its accuracy drew worldwide attention. Instruments were exported abroad, and it was even used in discovering major U.S. oilfields. The Eötvös balance also served to confirm the equivalence of inertial and gravitational mass – an insight later fundamental to Einstein's general theory of relativity.



Eötvös described his balance as follows:

It was a simple, straight stick, loaded at both ends and enclosed in a metal sheath to protect it from wind and temperature. Every nearby or distant mass exerts a force on it, while the suspending wire resists and twists – the degree of twist showing the exact strength of these forces. It is a Coulomb balance, simple as Hamlet's flute: one only needs to know how to play it. Like a musician producing subtle variations, the physicist can, with equal delight, detect the finest variations of gravity, peering into depths unreachable by our eyes or drills.

This document is one of three relating to the Eötvös torsion balance inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.





IMRE MADÁCH: THE TRAGEDY OF MAN

The Tragedy of Man (*Az ember tragédiája*) is a play by Hungarian author **Imre Madách** (1823–1864), first published in 1861. It is one of the cornerstones of Hungarian literature and remains among the most frequently staged Hungarian plays. Many of its lines have become well-known quotations.

The main characters are Adam, Eve, and Lucifer. As God creates the universe, Lucifer – the “ancient spirit of denial” – declares creation futile, predicting that humanity, made in God’s image, will seek to rival Him. Cast from Heaven, Lucifer gains dominion over the Trees of Knowledge and Immortality. Tempting Eve’s vanity and Adam’s pride, he causes their Fall. Expelled from Eden, Adam refuses to repent, convinced that freedom from divine command will bring human greatness.

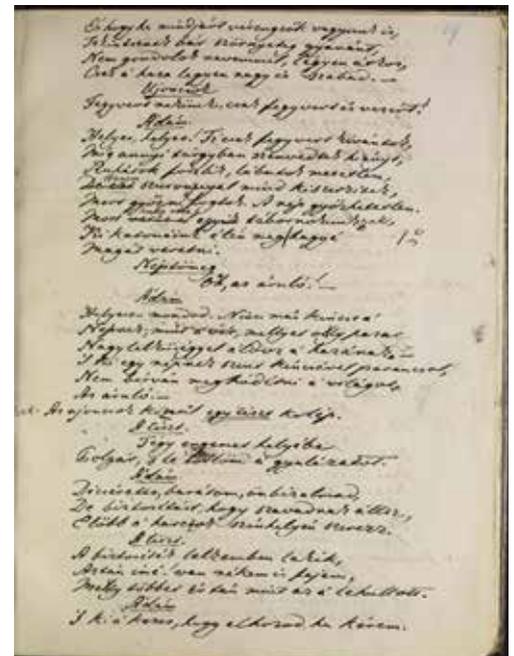
Lucifer then leads Adam through history in a visionary dream.

In every scene, Adam and Lucifer return as traveler and guide, with Adam taking on major historical roles while Eve appears within each era’s story. As history advances, Adam grows older and increasingly weary, shifting from a leader to an observer burdened by despair.

The final vision shows a dying Earth in an ice age, where humanity has fallen into primitive survival. Unsure whether this is truth or Lucifer’s illusion, Adam awakens and resolves to end his life, believing the future meaningless.

Eve finds him and reveals she is pregnant. Overcome, Adam kneels, acknowledging God’s triumph.

God rebukes Lucifer and reminds Adam that, whether or not he sees hope, his duty is to “strive on and have faith”.





SCENE 9 – Paris, 1793–1794 (in a dream of Kepler). Adam is Georges Danton; Lucifer is an executioner; Eve appears in two forms, first as an aristocrat about to be executed, then immediately following as a bloodthirsty poor woman

The scene suddenly changes to the marketplace of the Place de la Grève in Paris. The balcony becomes a scaffold, the table a guillotine, beside which stands LUCIFER the role of EXECUTIONER. ADAM as DANTON, addresses a milling crowd from the side of the scaffold. A company of ragged RECRUITS appears to the sound of drums. They form a line around the scaffold. Bright sunlight.

ADAM as if continuing his speech from the previous scene
Liberty, Equality, Fraternity! -

CROWD
And death to those who fail to recognize them!

ADAM
I quite agree. Two battlecries preserve
Our great ideal from universal menace,
One we address to those good souls we trust:
“France is in danger”, and that wakes them up,
The other we must thunder out to traitors:
It is but one word, “Tremble” - and they perish.
These rose up kings against us and we threw
A head to them - a head of state - the king’s;
The priests rose up against us, and we wrested
The lightning from their hands and reinstated

Reason, that ancient exile, on the throne.
But neither does our other call grow fainter,
And our best men still heed the country’s summons.
We have eleven armies at the front
And a constant stream of brave young men step
forth
To fill the gaps left by our fallen heroes.
Who says that madness and the lust for blood
Must decimate our country in due course?
You smelt the ore, the dross is drained away,
The better part remains, is purified.
And what if here and now we call for blood -
Let them think us monsters, I don’t mind,
My name may be accursed for all I care,
Providing France be powerful and free.

RECRUITS
We only ask for arms and one to lead us!

ADAM
That’s right, that’s right! You only call for arms
Despite the fact that you lack all things else:
Your clothes are ragged and your feet are naked,
With bayonets though you’ll make up your losses
Because you’ll win. The people can’t be conquered.
One general has just been executed
For leading our brave soldiers to defeat.

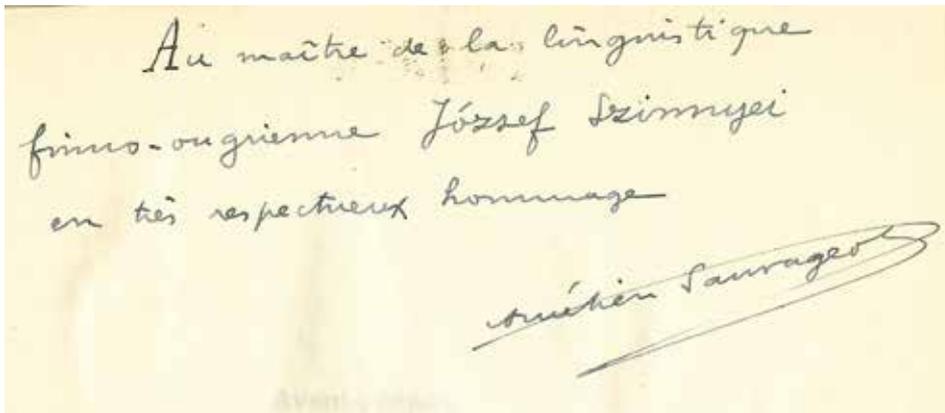


AURÉLIEN SAUVAGEOT: RECHERCHES SUR LE VOCABULAIRE
DES LANGUES OURALO-ALTAIQUES. BUDAPEST, 1929

Dedicated to József Szinnyei, linguist and university professor, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and Chief Librarian of the Academy Library between 1928–1943.

Dedication: *Au maître de la linguistique finno-ougrienne József Szinnyei en très respectueux hommage
Aurélien Sauvageot*

To the master of Finno-Ugric linguistics, József Szinnyei, with most respectful homage.



Aurélien Sauvageot (1897–1988) was a French linguist. He was specialised in Finno-Ugric languages. In 1923, he moved to Hungary to teach French at the Eötvös József Collegium in Budapest. He remained there until 1929, then moved back to France and completed his doctoral thesis on the lexicon of Uralo-Altai

languages, and a complementary thesis on Gothic articles. In 1931, Sauvageot inaugurated the professorship for Finno-Ugric languages at the École française des Langues Orientales. In 1932 and 1937, he published, along with József Balassa and Marcel Benedek the first Hungarian-French and French-Hungarian dictionary. Although Sauvageot retired in 1967, he remained actively involved in the activities of both the Société de Linguistique de Paris and the Cercle linguistique d'Aix en Provence, until his death in 1988. Sauvageot spent eight creative years in Hungary, from 1923 to 1931, during which he wrote his thesis on the problem of Uralo-Altai linguistic relationships (*Recherches sur le vocabulaire des langues ouralo-altaïques*). In this work, published in 1929, he tried to establish sound correspondences between the occlusives of Uralic and Altaic languages.



GROUP PHOTO INCLUDING LAJOS LIGETI AND PAUL PELLIOT

Lajos Ligeti (1902–1987) was a Hungarian orientalist and philologist, who specialised in Mongolian and Turkic languages.

Ligeti was born in Balassagyarmat in 1902. After completing his secondary studies in his native town, he entered the prestigious Eötvös-Kollégium. He studied classical languages, but concentrated on Turkish and Hungarian philology at the Budapest University under both Gyula Németh and Zoltán Gombocz, obtaining his doctorate in 1925. He spent three years on a scholarship in post-doctoral research in Paris where he studied Chinese under Henri Maspero, Tibetan under Jacques Bacot, and Mongolian and Inner Asian languages under Paul Pelliot. He was one of the three students – the others being Denis Sinor and Francis Cleaves – who carried on Pelliot’s work in Mongolian studies, and was his closest disciple.

Paul Eugène Pelliot (1878–1945) was a French orientalist, sinologist, tibetologist, and explorer.

Pelliot originally prepared for a diplomatic career; for this reason, he studied English at the Sorbonne, and later Mandarin Chinese at the École des Langues Orientales Vivantes. The talented young man completed the three-year program in just two years. His rapid progress and excellent results attracted the attention of Édouard Chavannes, the renowned sinologist and head of the Chinese department at the Collège de France, who became his mentor. Chavannes recommended him to the Sanskrit department led by Sylvain Lévi. Influenced by these two scholars, Pelliot decided to choose Oriental studies over a diplomatic career.

Pelliot’s influence profoundly shaped Ligeti’s later work, and he often acknowledged his teacher’s guidance as foundational to his own scholarly development. Their correspondence and mutual respect illustrate a productive collaboration between two generations of Orientalists.

Paul Pelliot (fourth from the right), the world-renowned explorer of Inner Asia and professor at the Sorbonne, among his students – including Lajos Ligeti (second from the right). (Paris, c. 1925–1928)





THE ALEXANDER BOOKS

Sándor Csoma de Kőrös (1784/8–1842) was a Hungarian philologist and Orientalist, author of the first Tibetan–English dictionary and grammar, and founder of Tibetology. Born in Kőrös, Transylvania (today Romania), he belonged to the Székely people, who traced their origins to Attila’s Huns. Seeking to uncover the roots of the Hungarians through language, he set out for Asia in 1820 and devoted his life to studying Tibetan and Buddhist philosophy. Known as *Phyi-glin-gi-grwa-pa* (“the foreign pupil”), he was later honoured as a bodhisattva by the Japanese. Csoma mastered seventeen languages and died in Darjeeling in 1842 while attempting to reach Lhasa.

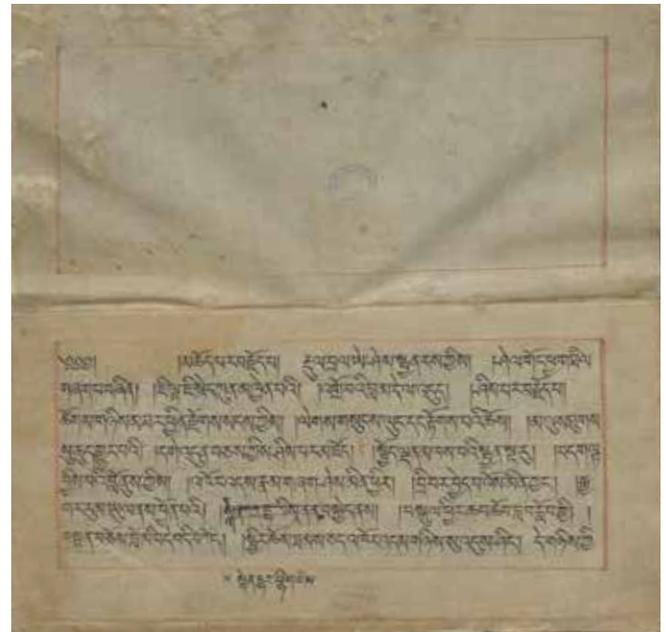
The Csoma Collection of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences preserves 36 Tibetan volumes, including the so-called *Alexander Books*, summaries of Tibetan scholarship prepared by Csoma’s teachers. Unique for being composed at his request, these works remain a lasting testament to his life and studies.

The Oriental Collection of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences conserves the following Alexander Books:

1. [inv. no.: Csoma No. 3] [inv. no.: Csoma No. 3] “A Ship Sailing on the Sea of (different) Philosophical Systems – Questions and Answers”

2. [inv. no.: **Csoma No. 4a-d**] Its title, as written in the colophon: “Answers to the Questions of Sken dha (=Skander, that is, Sándor) from India-Rum (=Roman, that is, European)” (*rgya gar rum yul pa sken dhas dris lan*). Like the previous book, this one also contains the answers to various questions, like “How did the world come into existence?”, “What do the ‘Three Treasures’ mean?”, “How did the sutras and tantras spread all over India and Tibet?”

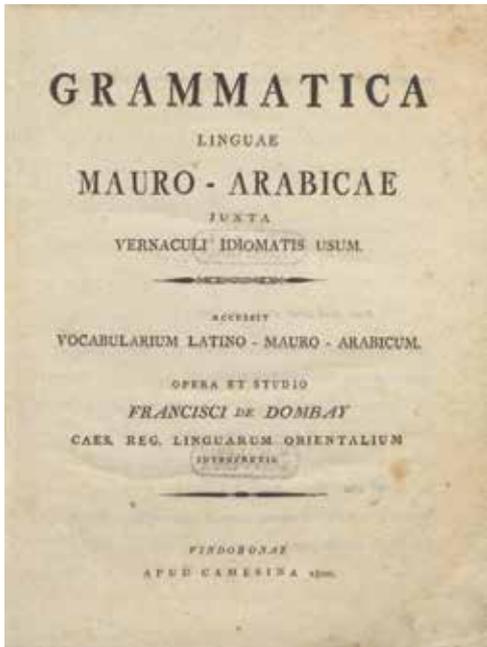
The author of the book was Kun-dga’ Chos-legs, a relative of Csoma’s main teacher Sangs-rgyas Phun-tshogs, abbot of the monastery of Rdzong-khul. The text was most probably composed around 1823–24.





GRAMMATICA LINGUAE MAURO-ARABICAE JUXTA VERNACULI IDIOMATIS USUM:
ACCESSIT VOCABULARIUM LATINO-MAURO-ARABICUM
FERENC DOMBAY

Ferenc Dombay of Ivánchfalva and Domba (1758–1810) was a Hungarian orientalist and imperial court interpreter. Trained at the Imperial and Royal Oriental Academy in Vienna, he joined Emperor Joseph II's 1783 embassy to Morocco. Fascinated by Arabic from an early age, he deepened his studies through



the Arabic manuscripts of the Escorial in Madrid. After serving as border interpreter in Zagreb, he was appointed imperial and royal court interpreter at the Secret Court and State Chancellery in Vienna in 1802 and became councillor in 1809.

Dombay's most significant achievement arose during his five-year stay in Tangier. There he composed one of the earliest systematic studies of Arabic dialects – *Grammatica linguae Mauro-Arabicae juxta vernaculi idiomatis usum* – along with a thematic *Vocabularium Latino-Mauro-Arabicum*. These pioneering works, written in Latin according to eighteenth-century scholarly norms, predated similar European efforts by almost a century. His planned *Catalogus manuscriptorum in lingua arabica* of Moroccan manuscripts, completed in 1787, remained unpublished.

Born into a Hungarian noble family long settled in Vienna, Dombay – who published under the German name Franz von Dombay – combined diplomatic service with deep academic research on Morocco's language, history, numismatics, and Islamic traditions. While fulfilling his duties translating Arabic, Turkish, and Persian, he collaborated with al-Hasan b. 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Wafalawī of Fez, who acted as linguistic informant and scribe, copying the Arabic texts in traditional Moroccan script.

Lacking printed models, Dombay relied on rigorous fieldwork and linguistic training, producing a grammar and vocabulary of enduring value. His materials, cited later in Dozy's 1881 Dictionary of Arabic Dialects, represent one of the earliest and most original European attempts to document North Moroccan Arabic.



AUREL STEIN AND DUNHUANG

Sir Marc Aurel Stein (1862–1943), Hungarian-born Orientalist, archaeologist, and explorer, devoted his life to studying the meeting points of Eastern and Western civilizations. His name is inseparable from the history of the Silk Road – an ancient network that not only linked China and the Mediterranean, but also transmitted art, technology, and ideas between great cultures. For over a millennium, Chinese, Indian, Iranian, and Western influences mingled there, and it was this cultural legacy that drew Stein to Central Asia.

Described by Sir Denison Ross as “the pride of two nations,” Stein lived in India from 1887, serving the British Empire while maintaining close ties to his native Hungary. He remained an active member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, donating books, manuscripts, and over 7,000 photographs to its Library. During his first great expedition (1906–1908), Stein travelled more than 16,000 kilometres through present-day Pakistan, Afghanistan, and western China. His journey traced ancient routes mentioned in Tang-era sources, including the path of General Gao Xianzhi’s 8th-century campaign. He surveyed and excavated key Silk Road sites – Khotan, Niya, Miran, Loulan, and Dunhuang – mapping 220 kilometres of the Han-dynasty “limes” and identifying the Jade Gate (Yumenguan).

In 1907, Stein reached the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas at Dunhuang, where he acquired part of the legendary Library Cave manuscripts discovered by Wang Yuanlu in 1900. These scrolls and silk paintings, dating from the 5th to 11th centuries, transformed the study of medieval China and Central Asia. His second expedition’s findings appeared in *Ruins of Desert Cathay* (1912) and the monumental five-volume *Serindia* (1921).

Stein’s legacy endures in the Archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the University of Hong Kong Libraries, and private collections worldwide – testament to a life spent uncovering the cultural crossroads of Eurasia.



196. Caves of the Thousand Buddhas, Dunhuang (1907)

Photograph of caves near the centre of the Mogao site. The upper antechapels and porches have disappeared; the remaining stucco figures show later restoration. Below are entrances to other cellas, partly filled with sand.



199. Exterior view of the Dunhuang Caves

View of the southern group of the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas. The famous Library Cave manuscripts, discovered in 1900, were first acquired by Aurel Stein in 1907 and later by Paul Pelliot. News of the find had already reached the German explorer Le Coq in 1905, two years before Stein's visit, sparking international interest.

200. The concealed documents cave, Mogao, Dunhuang, c. 1907

Composite image showing Cave 16 with the entrance to Cave 17, where the Library Cave manuscripts were found. Around 1900, Taoist monk Wang Yuanlu uncovered a sealed chamber packed with thousands of scrolls, paintings, and Buddhist artefacts dating from 406–1002 CE. He sold most of them to Aurel Stein during his 1907 expedition.





Celebrating 200 Years of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
A Chamber Exhibition at UNESCO Headquarters
Paris, 11 December 2025

Edited by:
Viktória Vas

Photographs from the collection of the Library and Information Centre
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The building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Photo by Tamás Szigeti

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